

A Wild Night

By ESTHER WALDORF MESSENGER

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If Victor Lind had glanced twice at Miss Arline Drury, he might have discovered interest, and possibly something deeper in the face of the only daughter and heiress of his employer, Robert Drury. The very fact that she was such, however, seemed to place an insurmountable barrier between them. He was therefore contented with a mere casual look at a face rather than at a soul, although the eyes were deep wells of expression likely to attract the seeker after real heart worth and fidelity.

Victor held only a fairly paid position in the establishment of Drury & Co., but he stayed on, making up for the boredom of routine days by spending his leisure evenings as enjoyably as possible.

Miss Arline Drury had visited the plant occasionally. It happened after Victor's first sight of her that she came more frequently. She had passed her desk several times and bestowed upon him the slight nod she awarded all whom she selected as knowing by sight. He was passing down a narrow roadway between two buildings of the plant one day, when a team of horses attached to a wagon loaded with iron. At a glance Victor recognized a runaway and fifty feet ahead his vision took in a girl in a pink dress, shrinking to the brick wall. Victor realized her danger. He swiftly dashed toward her, snatched at her swinging arm, backed into a niche where there was a door, burst it in with a powerful lunge of his stout shoulders, and held her shivering and overcome. For just a moment the grateful, expressive eyes of the girl held his own in thrill. Then he recognized her as the daughter of his employer.

"We can pass through the store-room to the office, if you please," he said. Arline Drury, pale and trembling, bowed an assent and he left her as they entered the office building. The next day Victor was sent for by Mr. Drury. The latter did not relax from his habitual cold dignity, but in a businesslike tone announced to Victor his promotion to a higher position. As Victor went back to his desk young Ernest Drury followed him. He was a mere lad, but there was deep sincerity in his bearing as he grasped Victor's hand.

"My sister told me to convey her deep gratitude to you for saving her life," he said, "and she—she asked me to tell you she will not forget."

There was a thrill in the boy's tones, but the momentary impress of emotion passed from Victor's mind. He and some boon companions had arranged for a meeting and late hours that evening and his thoughts were centered on that. It was a wild night, for some roistering members of the coterie indulged freely in strong drink, an adjournment was made to a place where gambling was going on, and Victor found himself in his room the next morning with no recollection of how he had arrived there.

He was mortified, then shamed and repentant, and then, as his memory cleared, startled and appalled. With the vividness of a lightning flash he recalled to him the events of the previous evening. He had fallen into the hands of a group of card sharks and had been induced to risk the money he had, and then he had indorsed a draft given to him for collection and had signed the name of his employer to a check for a large amount. He recalled the man who had lured him into this net of peril and guilt. His name was Jackson, and, realizing that he was in a terrible position, his reputation gone, his future blasted, Victor hurried in his clothes to seek Jackson. There was a knock at the door of his room. Serious faced, Ernest Drury entered.

"Mr. Lind," he said, "there are some papers you had better destroy and forget. I have no explanation to make. I come as emissary of another, whom I am not free to name, and who expresses the hope that you will never again yield to the influence of those who last night nearly led to your ruin."

Then the visitor was gone. Victor stood staring in startled bewilderment at the draft and check he had given Jackson. Then a conception of his narrow escape from ruin overcame him. He sank to his knees beside his bed and arose a penitent and grateful man, resolved never again to skirt the delicate path of guilty pleasure.

After that, young Drury seemed to put himself out of the way to act friendly and helpful toward Victor, but never would he discuss the matter of the forged documents. As if quite incidentally he invited Victor to the Drury home, and within a half-year Victor was engaged to Arline Drury.

It was just after their first child was born that Victor came across the papers that revealed to him that Arline had loved him from the first time she met him, that to her was due his rapid advancement in business and his rescue from the power of scheming gamblers. He relapsed the papers reverently. He never told of their discovery, but the inspiration of the same gave to his life a new devotedness to Arline that became the one impulse of his being.

The chief aim of every alligator's life is to become a watchdog.

Diamonds of Many Colors.
Although when free of color they are said to be of first water, diamonds are found in nearly every color of the rainbow—red, yellow, orange, green and blue.

Not Alarmed.
"The crows don't seem to pay any attention to that scarecrow." "No. The pecky critters think it's one of them artists from the city drawn' pleatins."—American Boy.

HIGH RANK EASILY ACQUIRED

Militaristic Knowledge Not at All Necessary for Haitian to Become "General" in Army.

Haiti, as a country, impresses a recent traveler with the multiplicity of its generals and the variety and gorgeousness of their uniforms. In the "Black Republic" the title of "general" it appears, is conferred for any sort of service to the state or, as is probably even more effective in providing revenue for the makers of uniforms, to the political party that happens to be in power. Military experience is not necessary to become a general, although apparently any and all generals are more or less recognized as such by the private soldiers recruited by a compulsory system, and so poorly and irregularly paid that a visitor to the president's palace must sometimes distribute coppers to the entire military body guard expectantly lined up to receive him. As soon as the citizen who has earned the gratitude of state or party receives his appointment, says the Chronicle, he "immediately buys himself a uniform of whatever color and style his fancy may dictate, to which he adds a collection of all sorts and kinds of medals." His next need is a charger; he acquires one of the diminutive ponies of the island, vaults or climbs into the saddle, and is complete.

BIG MEN ON CLUB'S ROSTER

Poets and Scientists Belonged to Organization Which Found Recreation in the Adirondacks.

Longfellow's dislike for killing animals prevented him from accompanying Emerson, Agassiz, Lowell and other learned men comprising a party of ten that went into the Adirondacks each summer, according to State Service, a New York monthly. These trips formed the foundation for Emerson's work entitled, "The Adirondacks," a journal dedicated to my fellow-travelers in August, 1858. An anecdote of the trip often repeated was that of Longfellow, who asked if Emerson would carry a gun. When informed he would, Longfellow replied: "Then I shall not go. Somebody will be shot." Emerson had great difficulty shooting a deer, as when he went night hunting he couldn't see the animal. He shot after his guide gave the order. When he missed, on one occasion, he said that he would shoot at the next square thing he saw, because he must kill a deer, even if the guide had to hold it by the tail while he shot.

Out of these trips the Philosopher's club was formed, which built a club at Amersand pond. The club expired when the Civil war broke out. Later fires swept the woods and spoiled the region around Follenshee, where the club was wont to shoot and fish.

The Child.

A child is an experiment. A fresh attempt to produce the just man perfect; that is, to make humanity divine. And you will vitiate the experiment if you make the slightest attempt to abort it into some fancy figure of your own; for example, your notion of a good man or a womanly woman. If you treat it as a little wild beast to be tamed, or as a pet to be played with, or even as a means to save you trouble and to make money for you, it may fight its way through in spite of you and save its soul alive; but if you begin with its own holiest inspirations and subvert them for your own purpose, then there is hardly any mischief you can do.—Bernard Shaw.

Men Who Respect Their Word.

Men of the right type have respect for their word. They treat a verbal promise as binding. Contracts to them are sacred things not to be broken so long as it is possible to keep them. They do not treat their notes with greater respect than they do their purposes in life. To them every step is taken with a view to realizing an ideal. Consequently they do not enter agreements rashly nor make promises promiscuously. Life is a real something that brings joy only as it contributes to the general good. This may seem a little too straight-laced when you first read it but you will see the truth in it as you ponder its meaning.—Grit.

Only Boys Throw Stones.

A stone thrown through the window of a moving railway train and wounding the passenger with broken glass, leads the Lancet (London) to say "It was presumably thrown by a boy; the fusion of the sexes has not yet got to the point of producing a girl who can throw a stone. Throwing seems to be a natural impulse in boys, or rather, we should say, the desire to hit a moving body with a missile is universal among them, but the impulse should be guided in the direction of wickets rather than trains."

Forests Small in Italy.

The total area of Italy, including the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, consists of about 71,500,000 acres, which is equivalent to the combined area of the states of New York and Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Jersey, says the Forestry Magazine of Washington. Within this comparatively small area, a population of 36,000,000, more than equivalent to one-third of this country is congested. Of the total area of Italy, only 17.64 per cent is now covered with forests.

The Rattlesnake's Rattle.

The rattle of the rattlesnake is developed from the single conical scale or epidermal spine, which in most snakes forms the internal tegument of the tail. The bone on which the rattle rests consists of the last caudal vertebra and is covered with a skin which is the beginning of the rattle in young rattlesnakes.

Optimistic Thought.
Social intercourse is the teacher of all things to mortals.

A CHRISTMAS WALK

In silvery softness the anthem closed
Like a slowly silenced bell;
The sacred calm of a peace divine
Like a benediction fell;
And out on the morning light that spread
A glimmer of amber gray,
I walked with Margery home from church
On an old, old Christmas Day.

A bland, mild day—for the rugged month
Had chosen a kindly mellow aftermath
From the Autumn's plenitude.
With scarcely a tang of wholesome cold
Did the Winter's breezes blow.
As Margery walked from church with me
On a Christmas long ago.

The earnest words that had touched our hearts—
The warnings, kindly and wise—
Had left a shadow of tenderness
In Margery's violet eyes;
The merry, boyish mirth I'd known
For a twelvemonth's flying space,
Had taken on that old Christmas Day,
A new and womanly grace.

As through the tremulous opal clouds
That shifted and swayed apart,
A sun ray lighted the reary face,
The wish was born in my heart
That down the trail of the unspent years,
Whatever their trend might be,
The soft-eyed maiden beside me then,
Night walk to the end with me.

Absently watching the velvet flakes
By the white pale set a wing,
I breathe the spirit of other years
While the bells of Yuletide ring;
And near me, smiling with happy eyes
At our children's romping play,
Is the girl who walked from church with me
On that old, sweet Christmas Day.
—Harriet Whitney Durbin, in People's Home Journal.



LESSON OF CHRISTMAS DAY

Example of Christ Should Inspire Unselfishness and Make Us Try to Remedy Faults.

Christmas should inspire a world of unselfishness. The example before us is almost too perfect, for it rather frightens us to attempt such divine heights of self-abnegation, but we can try. It will at least take us from the depths of selfishness, where most of us now are. Each Christmas day should teach us something of the lesson of the Holy Child's life.

If we could learn from Christmas, today and in the succeeding years the serious lessons of self-betterment and ennoblement it has to offer, how infinitely better it would be than just to look on it as a holiday for gifts and feasts, for extravagance and foolishness.

So take an hour or two off on Christmas day and give it up to retrospective and self-inspection. You will each find faults, if you judge yourself impartially, for no one is perfect. Then make a serious determination to try to overcome those faults, for only trying to improve is there any growth in character. If you are satisfied with yourself you stay just as you are with all your faults and virtues. But if you try hard to remedy the faults your character is constantly growing broader. This is the lesson which Christ has day has for each of you.

CHRISTMAS

Sparkling snow on the ground—
An invigorating tang to the air—
The mouth-watering smell of roasting from the cozy-smiling kitchen—our long safely home from overseas with brave stories to tell and all the manhood crystallized in him—relatives and old friends gathering at the festive table—holly wreaths at the windows and a crackling fire in the open hearth—the hilarious laughter of kiddies as the new toys make them bubble over—quintetted muffled mischievously above the door for the kids you mean to give bustling, unexpectant mother—the silvery, tranquil peal of church bells across the soft-moored open places—an amazing forgetfulness of the dour anticipations and business worries of only yesterday—a sudden re-bellion that love is life—
That is Christmas!

NEEDLESS PRECAUTION.



Hubby—It's all rot and nonsense to try to make children believe there's such a character as Santa Claus. They ought to be taught better.
Wifey—Our children don't need to be taught better. They know there's no Santa Claus in this house.

The Day We "Ate."

In other words, Christmas is the day where we shall celebrate, masticate and blearbonate, and the next day we shall meditate.

Whither We Are Flying.

The point in space toward which the sun with its planets is voyaging at the rate of a million miles a day now lies directly overhead early in the evening. The exact location of this point has not been finally determined, but it lies somewhere in the neighborhood of the brilliant star Vega. Do you feel that you are shooting upward, head first, about 25 times as fast as a cannonball?

See Al. St. Johns in "Speed"—Idle hour, Monday and Tuesday—adv.

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